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AUTHOR Lamberg, Walter J.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Two studies were undertaken to investigate the effect of a tutoring practicum module. This module was designed to improve the performance of education undergraduates using the informal inventory (IRI) in making auditory discriminations during oral reading between departures from text that either could or could not be explained as phonological between Spanish and English. In the first study, 31 IRI-trained undergraduates in elementary reading instruction were divided into experimental and control groups with module-trained students in each. In the second study, 35 IRI-inexperienced undergraduate students in an introductory class in elementary reading methods were divided into experimental and control groups. A pretest-treatment-posttestdesign was used with control groups, and intergroup-intragroup mean scores of pretests and posttests were compared by t-test. Subjects with IRI and module training had a significant increase in correct responses and a nonsignificant decrease in incorrect responses; subjects without IRI training but with module experience had similar results. The control groups (one with and one without IRI training) had nonsignificant increases in both types of response. Results indicate the need for module training along with IRI prepartion and show the limited value of practice without instruction. (Data tables, sample exercises, and references are included.) (DF)

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TRAINING IN IDENTIFYING ORAL READING DEPARTURES FROM TEXT WHICH CAN BE EXPLAINED AS SPANISH-ENGLISH PHONOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

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Walter J. Lamberg
The University of Texas at Austin

Laura Rodriquez
Education Service Center, Region XIII
State of Texas

Douglas A. Tomas
The University of Houston

Principal Author:
Walter J. Lamberg
406 EDB, Dept. C&I
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas 78712

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ABSTRACT

Two studies employed the same hypotheses, procedures, and materials, but used subjects with different training at two southwestern universities. Both studies investigated the effect of a training module designed to improve performance by prospective teachers in making auditory discriminations between departures from text, during oral reading, which could and could not be explained as phonological differences between Spanish and English. The significance of the study lies in the assumption that teachers of students with a Spanish-language background would make more effective diagnostic decisions if they are able to distinguish miscues which may be symptoms of reading skill deficiencies from departures from a "standard" reading of a text which are consistent with a student's dialect and which may not be symptomatic of any difficulty in recognition or comprehension. A pre-test-treatment-post-test design was used with a control group. T-tests were run to compare inter-and-intra-group mean scores on pre and post-tests. Subjects with prior training in conducting an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) and who had completed the module had a significant increase in correct responses and a non-significant decrease in incorrect responses. Subjects without the prior training in the IRI and who worked on the module also had significant increases in correct responses but also non-significant increases in incorrect. Two control groups (one with and one without training in the IRI) had non-significant increases in correct and incorrect responses. Results support the need for special training, such as that provided by the module, along with prior training in the IRI. Results show there is a limited value in practice without instruction.

In the studies reported here, the authors investigated the effects of training designed to improve skills of prospective teachers in assessing the oral reading of students with a Spanish language background. More specifically the training was in making accurate discriminations between those departures from text which could and those which could not be explained in terms of phonological differences between English and Spanish.

BACKGROUND

Teacher's Reactions to Linguistically Different Students

In recent years, some educators have been concerned with preparing teachers to work with "linguistically different" students. The language of these students is characterized by frequent occurrence of, what have been labeled, "nonstandard" dialect features (Shuy, 1977). In many instances, the language background or the first language is one other than English. Horn (1971) argued that there has been a:

> failure of teacher education programs to make adequate provisions to give teachers an understanding of (1) the nature of language other than their own idiolect; (2) language acquisition; and (3) the development of realistic, positive attitudes toward differing dialects. (p. ix)

The belief that teachers and prospective teachers lack those "realistic, positive attitudes" has received considerable support from research. Horn cites studies by Williams (1969, 1970, 1971) on teachers' attitudes. Reviewing research on language attitudes, Ford (1974) cites 11 studies which show that teachers and prospective teachers tend to (1) rate students negatively in terms of personality traits based on tape-recorded speech samples with nonstandard features; (2) rate students' language negatively when viewing videotapes of minority students; and

(3) form negative expectations for students' performance based on samples of language that exhibit nonstandard features.

Similar studies, noted by Shuy (1977) and Horvath (1977), elicited reactions to taped language of blacks, whites, and in one case, Cubans. Teachers were not specifically chosen as subjects for these studies. All the studies tended to support Shuy's point (1977 , p. 93) that "stigmatizing [or nonstandard] features tend to count against a speaker." Though most of the studies of teachers' attitudes used samples of the speech of Blacks, there is support for the existence of negative attitudes towards individuals whose English shows influence of a Spanish-language background (Garcia, 1974, Rey, 1974). These items can be explained in terms of differences between the Spanish and English phonological and syntactic systems. A number of features have been identified as occurring frequently in the English of many persons with a Spanish-language background in Southwestern United States (Lance, 1969; Natalicio and Williams, 1971; Rich, 1972; Mace and Matluck, 1973).

A next logical stage of research would address the question of what kinds of learning experiences can be provided in teacher-preparation to correct these problems. Basically two approaches are presently being employed at some universities: (1) improving education to provide knowledge and understanding about language and cultural differences through course work in linguistics, language acquisition, and ethnic studies; and (2) improving training to achieve competence in teacher-skills deemed important for working with "linguistically different" students.

Training might be improved in at least two ways: (1) Work on developing skills for individualizing instruction could be emphasized.

One goal would be competence in doing informal, objective assessment, e.g., the Oral Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) (Betts, 1940), to counter the negative, subjective evaluations of students and of their potential achievement. (2) Training could be directly geared to working with "linguistically different" students, e.g., special training in administering an IRI to such students.

Accuracy in Administering the Informal Reading Inventory

All of the studies reviewed by Ford (1974) used relatively subjective instruments to collect responses, such as the Language Attitude Scale (Taylor, 1973). These instruments were subjective in the sense that they called for qualitative judgements of language items or of students' personalities or performance. Ford recommended that future research consider other measures. One direction he suggested was to investigate"overt classroom behavior where matters of language are concerned. (p. 100)" He did not define "overt classroom behavior," but the authors believe that assessment behaviors would be relevant.

Three studies involved the use of an instrument employed in the classroom, the Oral IRI, which requires both quantitative and qualitative measurement. These studies led to the investigation reported here and provided support for the need for training directly related to work with "linguistically different" students.

In two of the studies (Lamberg, 1976; Lamberg & McCaleb, 1976), subjects were prospective teachers who had received training in conducting the Oral IRI in an introductory reading methods course (a practicum). All subjects had conducted at least five IRI's. Subjects conducted an IRI from a taped reading by a student who exhibited features of Black

dialect (Lamberg & McCaleb, 1976) and a student who exhibited features of Spanish (Lamberg, 1976). Subjects were highly accurate in recording and identifying miscues unrelated to dialect or language differences, but highly inaccurate in recording and correctly identifying instances of dialect and Spanish features.

In a third study (Lamberg and Tomas, 1976a) subjects were prospective teachers who had differing preparation experiences. One group had training in administering the IRI (one semester practicum) as well as experience in working with students with a Spanish-language background. A second group had the same kind and amount of training but not the special experience. The third group had neither training nor experience. Each group had some subjects who had studied two or more semesters of Spanish. In administering an IRI from a taped reading by a student who exhibited Spanish features, all groups showed little accuracy in recording and correctly coding Spanish features when compared with responses by three judges. A comparison between subjects within each group who did and did not study Spanish showed no significant differences in correct or incorrect responses. Those subjects who had the study of Spanish, the training, and the special experience did have significantly fewer incorrect responses ($p. < .05$) (but not more correct) than those in the other two groups who had Spanish. In other words, those students who had all three types of preparation showed less tendency to identify as Spanish features miscues which were not explainable in terms of language differences.

The implication of the study was that study of Spanish, training in the IRI, and experience with the "linguistically different student" were not sufficient preparation to result in desirable levels of accuracy.

Four other studies should be noted here, because they involved accuracy of teachers in conducting the IRI. None, however, was concerned with reading by "linguistically different" students. Kelly (1969) notes a study by Millsap(1962) which found that "experienced classroom teachers were not cognizant of the frustrational reading levels (p. 112)" of their students, when asked to conduct an IRI. In his own study, Kelly (1969) reported significant gains in ability to determine instructional level by teachers who participated in a "simulation-type inservice program (p. 116)." Windell (1975) reported that training involving an instructional module was effective in improving ability to determine instructional levels. In the two studies referred to earlier (Lamberg, 1976; Lamberg & McCaleb, 1976), the subjects, who demonstrated accuracy in recording miscues, had the benefit of training and actual experience in conducting the IRI.

THE STUDIES

This discussion reports two studies of the effects of one kind of special training experience on the accuracy of prospective teachers in conducting an IRI with a "linguistically different" student, specifically a student who exhibits Spanish-features in oral reading in English. Both studies involved the same training, materials, procedures, hypotheses, and data collection and analysis. Different investigators and subjects with different preparation were involved.

Training

The training module was developed through the process of

"discrimination programming" (Smith, 1976). Discrimination programming results in instruction (1) that focuses on those responses most important to the objectives of the instruction; and (2) that consists of discrimination exercises. The first step in the process is a task-analysis which identifies key responses to be mastered. In doing an inventory with a "linguistically different" student, teachers must, it is assumed, have more than a knowledge of the language differences. They must be able to apply the knowledge by making appropriate auditory discriminations (i.e., distinguishing between oral reading responses which match and do not match the text). Once they have recorded the departures, they must, when analyzing them, make appropriate coding responses (i.e., distinguishing departures they have recorded that are characteristic of the reader's dialect from those that are not).

Students were introduced to ten phonological features identified as frequently occurring in the English of some students with a Spanish-language background. These features, identified by other investigators (Lance, 1969; Natalicio and Williams, 1971; Rich, 1972; Matluck and Mace, 1973), were: substitution of /b/ for /v/, /y/ for /j̈/ and /ǰ/ for /y/, /t/ for /θ/, /d/ for /ð/, /č/ for /š/ and /š/ for /č/, /s/ for /z/ in the final position, /s/ for /z/ in the initial position, and /i/ for /l/. Each feature was presented through a generalization, two examples, and ten discrimination exercises.

The exercises consisted of a taped recording of ten sets of ten sentences, each read twice. One reading of each sentence would involve a miscue; the other would involve a Spanish feature. As subjects listened to the tape, they recorded, on a response sheet, the departure from the text above the appropriate word in the sentence. They then boxed in the

Spanish feature, to show they could make the discrimination. Figure 1 presents a sample.

Procedures

Data consisted of responses to pre and post-tests. The tests involved the same task, conducting two IRI's from taped readings. The taped readings exhibited both Spanish features and miscues. Both taped readings were of the same 100-word passage, but one reading demonstrated independent level and one, instructional level. The post-test was a repetition of the pre-test. The pre and post-tests involved two listenings each, of two different readings of the same passage.

Procedures for conducting the IRI were based in part on recommendations by Goodman (1973) and Guszak (1972). Directions were:

> Listen to the tape of the student reading the passage. As you listen, record all miscues made by the student. Write in variant pronunciations, substitutions, and insertions above the word. Indicate omissions by circling the word.

The following definition of "miscue" (Goodman, 1973, p. 5) was provided:

> Goodman has defined a 'miscue' as 'a response in oral reading which does not match the expected response' or a departure from a standard reading of the text.

Subjects were asked to record responses they thought might be Spanish features as well as those that they thought were not related to language differences. They listened to each reading twice and were allowed to make revisions of their responses after the second listening. The decision to play the tape twice was arbitrary. Generally a teacher would have only one chance to listen to a student's reading of a passage, if the assessment were based on sight-reading of the text. However, some teachers use tape recorders when conducting inventories, allowing for

as many listenings as the teacher can manage.

After the subjects had recorded the responses, they were asked to identify or code those which they believed to be explainable as differences between Spanish and English. Their coding response consisted of putting a box around the item.

The experimental groups completed the one-hour module; they then repeated the task, described above, as a post-test on the module. The control groups did other work, for an hour, before repeating the task. On the post-test, both groups followed exactly the same procedures as for the pre-test. They used a different copy of the worksheet (with the same passage and directions). They did not refer to their responses on the pre-test; the first worksheets were collected after the pre-test.

Subjects' responses were compared, for agreement or disagreement, with the responses of three judges. The three judges had experience in giving the IRI and in doing research on language differences. The judges completed the module before doing the task. The judges' scores (26,24,20) were averaged, for a mean of a total of 23.33 Spanish features for both IRI's.

Recording and Analysis of Data

Each subject had two scores: one point for each Spanish feature correctly coded, and one point for each incorrectly coded (on both IRI's). If positive changes occurred from the pre to the post-test, the first score would increase; the second would decrease.

Mean scores were computed for both groups for the two variables. T-tests were run to measure differences for each variable (1) between inter-group mean scores, and (2) between intra-group mean scores.

The question addressed in this study was: How accurately would

prospective teachers, with and without special training, distinguish Spanish features from miscues unrelated to Spanish when conducting an IRI. Accuracy was measured in two ways: (1) a count of the number of features correctly coded as Spanish features; and (2) a count of the number of miscues unrelated to Spanish which were incorrectly coded as Spanish features.

Null Hypotheses

There will be no significant differences between the mean scores on the post-test for the experimental group and the control group when compared on:

1.1. Features correctly coded as Spanish features.

1.2. Miscues incorrectly coded as Spanish features.

There will be no significant differences between the mean scores on the pre and post-tests for the experimental group when compared on:

2.1. Features correctly coded as Spanish features.

2.2. Miscues incorrectly coded as Spanish features.

There will be no significant differences between mean scores on the pre and post-tests for the control group when compared on:

3.1. Features correctly coded as Spanish features.

3.2. Miscues incorrectly coded as Spanish features.

STUDY 1

Subjects

Subjects were 31 students in the third year of an undergraduate program for certification in Elementary Reading. All subjects had conducted five or more IRI's and completed an introductory reading

methods course (a practicum). Subjects were divided into an experimental group (16) and a control group (15). In the groups, 12 and 14, respectively, had practicum experience tutoring students with a Spanish-language background.

Results

A comparison of the groups' performance on the pre-test showed no significant differences before treatment. For correct responses, the experimental group's mean was 11.19 vrs. the control group's mean of 13.46. For incorrect responses, the means were 2.06 vrs. 2.73. Results are reported in Table 1.

A comparison of the groups' performance on the post-test showed significant differences, favoring the experimental group. For correct responses means were 19.75 (experimental) vrs 14.60 (control) with $\pm = 4.34$; $p < .001$. For incorrect responses, means were 1.56 (experimental) vrs. 3.53 (control), with $\pm = 2.53$; $p < .01$. Hypotheses 1.1 and 1.2 were rejected. Table 1 reports the data.

A comparison of pre and post-test scores for the experimental group showed significant differences in correct responses: means were 11.19 vrs. 19.75; with $\pm = 8.82$; $p < .001$. The decrease in incorrect responses was not significant statistically: means were 2.06 vrs 1.56. Hypothesis 2.1 was rejected; 2.2 was accepted. Table 2 reports the results.

A comparison of pre and post-test scores for the control group showed no significant differences in the correct responses (means = 13.46 vrs 14.60) and incorrect responses (means = 2.73 vrs. 3.53). Increases were found in both correct and incorrect responses. Hypotheses 3.1 and 3.2 were accepted. Table 2 reports the results.

STUDY 2

Subjects

Subjects were 35 undergraduate students enrolled in two sections of an introductory elementary reading methods course. Students had no prior study of reading methodology, and particularly, of the Informal Reading Inventory. One section of the course was designated as the experimental group (N=16); the other section was selected as the control group (N=19). The study was conducted on the first day of class to insure that the subjects were naive.

Results

A comparison of the groups' performance on the pre-test showed no significant differences before treatment. For correct responses, the experimental group's mean was 12.19 as compared to the control group mean of 10.53. For incorrect responses, the means were 4.13 vrs. 5.26. Table 3 reports the data.

A comparison of the groups' performance on the post-test revealed significant differences for correctly identifying Spanish features, favoring the experimental group. No significant differences were found between groups for incorrect responses. For correct responses, means were 20.69 (exp.) and 13.68 (con.) with $\underline{t} = 5.19$, $\underline{p} < .001$. For incorrect responses, means were 7.38 vrs 6.89. Hypothesis 1.1 was rejected; hypothesis 1.2 was not. Table 3 reports the data.

A comparison of the pre and post-test scores for the experimental group found a significant increase in the numbers of correct and incorrect responses. The means for correct responses were 12.19 vrs 20.69, with

t = 10.25, $p < .001$. For incorrect responses, means were 4.13 vrs 7.38 with t = 2.88, $p < .05$. Hypotheses 2.1 and 2.2 were rejected.

A comparison of the pre and post-test scores for the control group found a significant increase in the number of correct responses but no significant difference for incorrect responses. For correct responses, the means were 10.53 vrs 13.68 with t = 4.38, $p < .001$. The means for incorrect responses were 5.26 vrs 6.89. Hypothesis 3.1 was rejected; hypothesis 3.2 was not. Table 4 reports the data.

Discussion

A discussion of results from both studies will be presented, since both involved the same hypotheses, procedures, and materials. Three possible effects need to be considered: (1) prior training in conducting an IRI, in a practicum experience, (2) special training of the module, and (3) practice afforded by conducting an IRI from the taped readings in the pre and post-tests.

An examination of results from both studies reveals considerable support for the effectiveness of two kinds of teacher-preparation experiences: the study of and the practice in conducting the IRI in a practicum experience, and the module, which was designed to train individuals to discriminate between departures from text which are and are not explainable as "Spanish features."

The one group which had both experiences (experimental, Study 1), had the most desirable post-test performance. Correct responses increased significantly, and incorrect decreased (though not significantly) (11.19 vrs 19.75, and 2.6 vrs 1.56). The experimental group in Study 2, which had

no prior training, also improved significantly in correct responses, but also increased in incorrect responses as well (12.19 vrs 20.69 and 4.13 vrs 7.38). It should be noted that both groups improved to desirable levels in correct responses, in the sense that their mean scores were close to the judges' mean. A reasonable interpretation is that the special training of the module is effective in increasing correct responses, but prior training with the IRI is needed to reduce incorrect responses; that is, persons need training which focuses on recognition of Spanish features, as well as training which focuses on recognition of various kinds of miscues, e.g., insertions, partial and gross mispronunciations, substitutions.

This interpretation seems consistent with the data from the two control groups. An additional interpretation is warranted; that there is an interaction of effects betweeen prior training and the module. Prior training, itself, does not lead to a reduction in errors. Both control groups showed increases in incorrect responses. For the Study 1 control, with prior training, means were 2.73 and 3.53. For the Study 2 control, with no training, means were 5.26 and 6.89.

Finally, both control groups' responses suggest a practice-effect. Both groups increased correct responses: for Study 1 control, 13.46 vrs 14.60; and for Study 2 control, 10.53 vrs 13.68 (with significant differences). It seems reasonable to conclude that limited practice, by itself, is not sufficiently effective. (Practice was limited to conducting four IRI's, on pre and post-tests, with each taped reading played twice, for a total of eight practices.)

Implications for Further Program Development and Research

The results of both studies along with earlier studies by the authors support the need for special training to prepare teachers to work with students who are "linguistically different" from them. The results also support the inclusion of the special training in the teacher-preparation program. A comparison of results with use of the module and those with use of an earlier version of the module (Lamberg and Tomas, 1976b) suggest that the auditory discrimination training is a needed feature. The earlier version presented the same features and examples of each but had no auditory training. In other words, exposure to dialect or language differences through reading about them and seeing examples does not seem sufficient preparation. Similar training seems warranted for other dialect or language differences with which prospective teachers may be confronted, e.g., Black dialect.

The results suggest the productiveness of Ford's call for further research using a variety of measurement instruments and considering actual classroom behavior of students and teacher. One point which should be pursued is this: Previous studies found, generally, negative subjective responses to nonstandard features. In the studies conducted by the authors, using the IRI as the instrument for eliciting reactions, the reactions were not negative in these senses: (1) Subjects did not record more miscues than judges' found; the mean total miscues were not an underestimation of the student's oral reading performance. (2) Relatively few miscues were incorrectly identified as Spanish features, on pre-tests. (3) Many Spanish features either were not noticed or if noticed were not recorded as departures from text. One may ask if the quantitative, systematic (though not totally nonsubjective) measure employed in the IRI

tends to counteract negative subjective responses.

This question could be pursued by having subjects respond on two or more measures to samples which exhibit language differences. For examples, would the subject's subjective judgements of a reader's reading ability, future success, or personality be consistent or inconsistent with a quantitative measure of miscues? Or, would consistency exist between the quantitative measure and the subject's subjective determination of whether a reader were reading at the frustrational, instructional, or independent level; in other words, would they, indeed, follow Goodman's recommendation to disregard dialect features in counting miscues, after being trained to follow that recommendation? Finally, and most importantly, the question to be addressed is whether or not the special training, discussed in this report, will have a desirable effect on teachers (as opposed to prospective teachers) in improving their diagnosis and instruction of students whose dialect or language differs from theirs.

Table 1

Inter-group Scores of Prospective Teachers with Prior Training in the IRI, One Group with Special Training

Groups	Correct Responses		Incorrect Responses	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Control N=15	13.46	14.60	2.73	3.53
Experimental N=16	11.19	19.75	2.06	1.56
+	1.54	4.34[a]	.82	2.53[b]

[a] $p < .001$

[b] $p < .01$

Table 2

Intra-group Comparison of Scores of Prospective Teachers With Prior Training in the IRI, One With Special Training

	Control N=15			Experimental N=16		
	Pre-test	Post-test	+	Pre-test	Post-test	+
Correct	13.46	14.60	1.79	11.19	19.75	8.82[a]
Incorrect	2.73	3.53	2.05	2.06	1.56	.98

[a] $p < .001$

Table 3

Inter-group Comparison of Scores of Prospective Teachers, One Group With Special Training

Groups	Correct Responses		Incorrect Responses	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Control N=19	10.56	13.68	5.26	6.89
Experimental N=16	12.19	20.69	4.13	7.38
+	.42	5.19[a]	.27	.08

[a] $p < .001$

Table 4

Intra-Group Comparison of Scores of Prospective Teachers, One Group With Special Training

	Control N=19			Experimental N=16		
	Pre-test	Post-test	+	Pre-test	Post-test	+
Correct	10.53	13.68	4.38[a]	12.19	20.69	10.25[b]
Incorrect	5.26	6.89	1.85	4.13	7.38	2.88[c]

[a] $p < .001$
[b] $p < .001$
[c] $p < .05$

shir
1. a. My shirt is dirty.

/chirt/
b. My shirt is dirty.

shows
2. a. Clean my shoes please.

/choes/
b. Clean my shoes please.

/chopping/
3. a. I went shopping at the Mall.

chope-ing
b. I went shopping at the Mall.

/watch/
4. a. She has to wash the clothes.

washe
b. She has to wash the clothes.

dis
5. a. He broke another dish.

/ditch/
b. He broke another dish.

Figure 1. Sample exercises from module.

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